**Care of Animals Policy**

**Purpose of Policy**

Rainbow Nursery acknowledges that children may come into contact with animals during the time at nursery, whether it is micro-beasts, local wildlife or animals cared for by the nursery. We fully recognises the positive impact caring for and interacting with animals can have on a child’s development in the early years, as supported by the guidance document released by the Care Inspectorate, Animal Magic (2018).

**Pets**

In order to promote safe and quality opportunities to observe and care for animals, Rainbow Nursery sites operate on these principles:

* Parents/carers are made aware of all animals housed in the setting.
* A full documented risk assessment will be completed - including considerations for children with any allergies.
* Any animals kept by the nursery are homed appropriately and securely - in hutches etc.
* Only staff have responsibility for deep cleaning out the animal homes (where applicable) - Protective equipment such as gloves and aprons are used - Any droppings should be disposed of away from play/eating areas.
* Staff will ensure all pets have had all of their relevant vaccinations, are registered with the vet and are child-friendly. Children will have no contact with animals not up to date with their vaccinations or who are ill.
* Animals are not allowed near food areas - animals will have their own area for exploration and housing.
* Children will wash their hands with soap and water after handling animals and before eating.

Staff will ensure there are robust protocols in place to manage safe and suitable care of animals and any risk of cross-contamination on the individual sites in conjunction with the Infection Control Policy.

**Wildlife**

During walks and outings, children will come across many different types of wildlife which can be used to educate the children about the wider world around them. It is important that staff protect the children and themselves from any hazards that can come from wildlife. Staff will encourage children to observe wildlife and habitats rather than using hands on interaction. Any interaction must be followed by handwashing.

**Dogs**

Staff will encourage children not to interact with unfamiliar dogs and will be reminded not to touch any dog faeces if they see it. If any child does touch some then their hands must be cleaned immediately.

**Death**

Should an animal die, the approach by staff will be gentle and considered as per the individual children’s needs and beliefs.

**Date Completed: October 2023**

**Review Date: October 2024**

*This policy will be monitored in line with relevant legislation and good practice guidelines*